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Article in Britain Links Ill-Fated KAL Flight to Intelligence Mission

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LONDON, June 18—An article in a British defense magazine strongly suggests that the Korean Air Lines jet shot down by Soviet fighter pilots last September was part of a coordinated U.S. intelligence plan, involving spy satellites and the space shuttle, to gather data on Russian air defenses.

The article suggests that the use of the airliner was an attempt to revive techniques used in episodes 20 years ago. Then, the author alleges, two American military planes that officially "strayed" into East German airspace and were shot down by Soviet jets were probably involved in coordinated attempts to use newly developed electronic eavesdropping techniques from space satellites to record the Russian radar activity generated by the penetrating U.S. jets.

The Reagan administration has flatly denied that the downed airliner, in which 269 passengers died, was connected to an intelligence mission. The Russians, however, consistently made that claim.

[Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger called the article in Defense Attache magazine a repetition of "the total set of lies that the Soviet Union published" after the airliner was shot down in an effort to cover up "cold-blooded murder."]

The new analysis and some claimed new historical details are contained in the current issue of Defense Attache magazine, a privately owned international defense review published every two months. British officials said yesterday, without commenting on the article, that the magazine is widely read within the Ministry of Defense and is regarded as a "sober and responsible publication."

The article is written under the pseudonym "P. Q. Mann." An introductory note from the editor, Rupert

Pengelly, says that the author is well known to the editor but that the author's identity "for professional reasons must remain anonymous."

The introductory note says the editor does not necessarily agree with all the author's views, and notes that the magazine had previously stated it did not believe KAL Flight 007 was on a spy mission. Nevertheless, Pengelly wrote, "the fresh material adduced here gives much to ponder."

British and other western sources said yesterday they still believe that navigational error took the plane 300 miles off course as it strayed for about two hours in and out of Soviet airspace, and that the conspiracy theories do not hold up. They said the plane was off course virtually from the time it left Alaska.

Nevertheless, the feeling among some sources is that the new article is the most skillfully done on the subject and that it contains new information. Some sources, noting the anonymous authorship and apparent access to some intelligence information, also suggest it might be part of a Soviet disinformation effort.

[In a dispatch from Washington, the official Soviet news agency Tass said the Reagan administration has "clearly been flustered" by the Defense Attache article on Flight 007, which, it said, was "an anti-Soviet spy action with the use of a South Korean plane."]

The author of the article discloses, apparently for the first time, that nine days before a U.S. Air Force T39 jet was shot down about 60 miles inside East Germany 20 years ago, a new electronic data-gathering satellite had been launched from California on Jan. 19, 1964. The author claims the sat-

ellite's orbit placed it in "optimum" position, precisely at the time of the T39 penetration into East Germany, to record the Russian radar activity as its

air defense system was alerted. The author also says the Soviets did not say anything at the time about the satellite.

On March 10, 1964, 42 days later, the author claims the same satellite was once again in just the right position in its orbital path to record the reaction as a U.S. Air Force RB66 reconnaissance plane came across the border, almost at the same time and place as the first aircraft, and was shot down.

The author claims that the chances of this being coincidence are remote, and that while this kind of activity was apparently shelved, it

was not forgotten and contained the seeds of the KAL disaster.

The author makes heavy use of an article in Pravda on Sept. 20 by Marshal of Aviation Pyotr Kirsanov laying out the Soviet version of the event. That version stated that an American Ferret-D electronic data-gathering satellite made three "accurately timed" passes over the region before the airliner entered Soviet airspace, during the time it first entered Soviet airspace over the Kamchatka Peninsula, and then when it continued over Sakhalin Island.

The author contends that if the claimed earlier efforts to coordinate plane penetrations and satellites had been known publicly, more attention would have been paid to the Pravda statements in the American media.

Here the author further links the KAL episode to the delayed launching, 36 hours before the KAL shoot-down, of the space shuttle mission STS-8 from Cape Canaveral.

The shuttle was placed into an orbit that took it 1,400-2,000 miles south of the KAL track but still "a discreet distance" and "amply close to involve the shuttle in its [military]